

Jiří Kovanda

1/7 – 12/8

Lulu is very pleased to present a solo exhibition of the Prague-based, Czech artist Jiří Kovanda (b. 1953).

It seems almost odd, even ironic that an artist of such radical modesty and avowed economy should be the subject of so many superlatives. And yet he is. One of the most celebrated artists of his generation in the Czech Republic and Eastern Europe, Jiří Kovanda's influence reaches far and wide on the Continent and beyond. It was not always this way. Akin to many of his regional coevals, Kovanda was eclipsed by time and circumstance, and only came to more general attention in the mid-aughts thanks to exhibitions like "Jiří Kovanda vs The Rest of the World" (2006) curated by Work Method, which traveled extensively throughout western Europe, and his prominent inclusion in Documenta XII the following year. It is thanks to these exhibitions that he initially became known for his discreet and illegal performances in the streets of Prague in the 1970s, but he has since come to be equally appreciated for his slight sculptural interventions, collages and photographs.

To describe what he does as "poetic" is an understatement. With great humor, precision and simplicity, Kovanda seeks out and valorizes the hidden textures and unsuspected congruities of the every day. His penchant for the slight is as much a byproduct of an allergy to the self-important, grandiose and monumental as it is a preference for the personal, lived and intimate. It is for these reasons that he is often characterized as a conceptual artist, but this is something of a misnomer. Kovanda's work is not embedded in language. Nor is it necessarily the byproduct of a specific philosophical or political current of thought or position. If anything, it is an ethical position, embedded in the world and the materials and relations of which it is so richly, and at times, Kovanda reminds us, surreptitiously composed.

In addition to maintaining an active, international career as an artist, he is also a dedicated and respected educator in the Czech Republic, especially in Prague, where he continues to influence and encourage generations of emerging artists.

Jiří Kovanda (b. 1953, Prague) is a self-taught Czech artist based in Prague. A selection of recent solo exhibitions includes: (2016) *Sea on the Ceiling, Base / Progetti per l'Arte*, Firenze; *Third Mind / (Im)Possibility of Collaboration*, Narodni Gallery, Prague; *Jiří Kovanda*, Sokolska 26, Centrum Kultury, Ostrava; *Jiří Kovanda*, MNAC, National Museum of Contemporary Art, Bucharest; *The Grounds We Tread*, Pump House Gallery, London; *Fresh Breeze*, gb agency, Paris. (2015) *White Sheet (Sabana Blanca)*, MAZ, Museo de Arte, Zapopan; *Jiří Kovanda (with Katarína Hladekova)*, Fait Gallery + Mem, Brno; *MOOM*, Daadgalerie, Berlin; *Jiří Kovanda Versus the Rest of the World*, Czech Center, Berlin. A selection of recent group exhibitions includes: (2016) *Quand fondra la neige, où ira le blanc*, Opere dalla Collezione Enea Righi, Palazzo Fortuny, Venice; *Detail ist alles*, Kunshalle Mainz, Mainz; *Aus der Sammlung, Bild, Realität und Forschung von 1960 bis 1980*, Neue Galerie, Graz (2015) *Transmissions: Art in Eastern Europe and Latin America, 1960–1980*, MoMA, New York; *Unorthodox*, The Jewish Museum, New York; *The Lulennial: A Slight Gestuary*, Lulu, Mexico City; *Tout le monde*, Centre d'art contemporain d'Ivry - le Crédac, La Manufacture des Œillets, Ivry-sur-Seine.